

Realizing Our Dreams

Shanda knows a lot about being first. When she receives her diploma from California State University, Hayward (CSUH), next year, she'll be the first in her large extended family to earn a four-year degree. Soon she'll be the first Hayward nursing student ever to represent California at a conference of world leaders in the field of cancer treatment—and, when she flies to London for the conference, yes, the trip overseas will be her first.



Melissa isn't quite the first in her family to finish college. Her father, Ron, was a telephone lineman who completed a master's degree in statistics at Cal State Hayward. The day after he passed his final exam, Ron put on a suit and walked into the phone company personnel office, where he was promoted almost on the spot to a job as a statistician. Melissa was just six years old at the time; today, she is carrying on a family tradition as a graduate student in statistics at Cal State Hayward.



When Scott was a little boy in Korea, he and his mother scavenged the empty fields for rice grains left behind by farmers. Eventually, fate brought mother and son to the East Bay, where bad luck followed. Scott's mother suffered a schizophrenic break, and the boy was handed around to foster homes, until one caring couple taught him self-confidence and a love of learning. Today, that same boy is a Woodrow Wilson fellow at CSUH and has been accepted at some of the world's most prestigious graduate schools.



Jeff almost flunked out of high school. Good with his hands, he went to work in a garage, where an observant boss suggested he undergo tests for dyslexia. Sure enough, Jeff had a serious learning disability. (In a wonderful twist of fate, he married the woman who tested him.) Eventually, he was able to enroll at Cal State Hayward, where special attention to his disability helped him "ace" every class.



Shirley, at 40, has twin girls to raise on her own and aging parents to consider. Even so, she is managing to earn a master's degree in speech therapy at CSUH. "Fresh out of college, I never would have known what I could do," she says, crediting her Hayward instructors for much of her success. "Their encouragement helps me get through those times when I think I might not make it."



When Damone first arrived at CSUH in 1977, he didn't know a single soul who had finished college. He went on to become the first African American to serve as student body president. Today, he is a criminal defense attorney, defending the rights of children in San Francisco's poorest neighborhood and realizing his dream of a meaningful life.



Everyone has dreams. For those who dream of a better life, a fuller life, or a whole new life, Cal State Hayward is the land of opportunity. For those who dream of a healthier economy, better public schools, or upward mobility for all, CSUH is the place to make it happen. This is the people's university, where all of us can aim high and reach far. . . .

(Subsequent text omitted for brevity).